



## State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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### Testimony in **SUPPORT** of House Bill Number 5171 Education Committee February 26, 2017

Co-Chairs Fleischmann, Boucher, and Slossberg; Vice Chairs Somers, Bye, and Sanchez; Ranking Member Lavielle; and Distinguished Members of the Education Committee:

I would like to thank the Committee for raising **House Bill Number 5171: An Act Prohibiting The Executive Branch From Making Rescissions Or Other Reductions To The Education Cost Sharing Grant During The Fiscal Year.**

It is no secret that the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant is essential to municipalities, yet there is much uncertainty regarding how much each should expect to receive. Although the allocation of ECS funds is supposed to be governed by a formula, we have seen its dispersion manipulated, time and time again, for political gain.

Unfortunately, ECS funding has become a political tool, and its manipulation has essentially turned municipal budgeting into a guessing game. For an example, one need not look any further than just last year, when Governor Malloy held ECS funds hostage in an attempt to force the legislature into complying with his budget recommendations. This is not right, and it should not stand.

Because most municipalities set their town mill rates around April and May, they must estimate the amount that they expect to receive, and hope that their estimation is fulfilled. Over estimation means a deficit that the municipality is not prepared for; it means difficult cuts to critical services. Critical services (like education) should NEVER be seen as a bargaining chip.

House Bill 5171 aims to create more predictability for ECS funds (and more broadly, for town budgeting). If passed, this bill would prevent mid-fiscal-year changes, by the Governor, to the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) grant levels that are allocated to municipalities. It would ensure that municipalities receive the funds that they are promised.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in **SUPPORT** of House Bill 5171, and **I strongly urge the Education Committee to advance such important legislation, and in doing so, increase predictability and fairness in the municipal budgeting process.**